UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

December 2024

Operational Update 36

HONDURAS

Population figures

Internal displacement

+247,000

people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of generalized violence between 2004 and 2018. Numbers could be higher in 2024, as triggers of internal displacement persist.

Asylum

27,888

Honduran nationals sought asylum in Mexico from 1 January to 31 December 2024, continuing to rank as the first nationality of asylum requests to this country.

173

*people sought asylum in Honduras from 1 January to 31 December 2024 and are mainly from **Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia and El Salvador,** among 10 other nationalities. 21% of the applications were made by women, 19% by girls, 43% by men and 17% by boys. Compared to the same period in 2023, the asylum applications in Honduras have increased by 62%. This is the highest number of asylum applications Honduras has registered in a single year.*

369,258

refugees and migrants entered Honduras irregularly from 1 January to 31 December and registered with the National Migration Institute (INM), which represents a 32% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.

Return

45,193

Hondurans were returned to the country in 2024 until 13 December.

Refuge

201

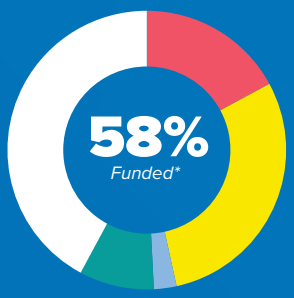
*recognised refugees are currently living in Honduras. Refugees are mainly from **Nicaragua, El Salvador and Venezuela.** 24% are women, 47% are men, 13% are girls, and 16% are boys.*

Our response

179,813 people

have been reached by December 2024 by UNHCR and its partners, mainly refugees and migrants on the move and internally displaced individuals, but also asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, and host community members, with services such as shelter, direct support to cover basic needs, case management, protection monitoring, livelihoods activities, risk mitigation and through community-based protection activities.

Funding



As of 31 December 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**UNHCR appealed for USD 30,8 million for its 2024 programme, of which only USD 17,8 million (58%) has been funded. USD 13 million is still needed to continue supporting people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, returnees with needs of protection, asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants.*

Context

Violence and extortion

Insecurity in Honduras remains a serious concern, with violence persisting across the country.

In Choluteca, **three violent deaths were reported in less than 48 hours** while San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa experienced **significant incidents of violent crime**, including kidnappings and murders.

The **persistent gang activity** driving this violence underscores the critical need for more effective security measures and comprehensive strategies to protect vulnerable populations.

Violence against women and girls

766 cases of sexual violence against women and girls were reported during the first quarter of 2024, resulting in more than eight cases per day.

Victims of these crimes frequently lack trust in the justice system, a challenge exacerbated by a high rate of impunity.

Women's organizations report that only 7% of cases of violence against women and girls are judicially processed.

Additionally, between December 2022 and October 2024, during the State of Emergency, **more than 600 women were violently murdered.** Over the same period, around **75 multiple killings** were documented, with **43% involving the violent death of one or more women.**

Addressing violence against women and girls requires urgent, coordinated efforts, strong institutional responses and broad collaboration.

Human rights situation

Farm workers' organizations reported **threats and acts of violence** against members of an agricultural cooperative in the Bajo Aguán region. **Armed attacks** have threatened the safety of these communities. **The organizations have called for government intervention to ensure the protection of those affected**

This situation highlights the interaction between land disputes, violence, and displacement risks in the region. **UNHCR advocates for durable solutions ensuring protection measures.**

Political and legislative challenges

On 11 and 12 December, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Migration attended the Cartagena+40 event in Santiago, Chile. During the event, the Declaration and Action Plan of Chile 2024-2034 was adopted, inspired by the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984).

This plan builds on its expanded refugee definition and **reinforces regional commitments to address the comprehensive needs of refugees and displaced persons** over the next decade in Latin America.

Environmental challenges

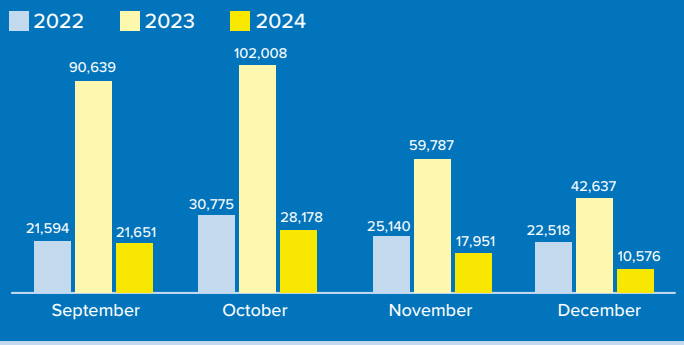
During the last quarter of the year, the northern region experienced over 30 days of continuous rainfall, resulting in widespread flooding.

Communities in Cortés were isolated, with severe impacts on infrastructure, agriculture, and livestock, heightening vulnerabilities across the region, and highlighting the link between extreme weather events and displacement.

Context

From January to December 2024, the INM reported that **369,258 refugees and migrants** had registered for a transit permit, representing a **32% decrease** compared to the same period in 2023.

Monthly irregular entries to 2022 - 2024



In December 2024, **10,576 people received transit permits** from INM to cross Honduras, marking a 41% decrease in comparison to November 2024.

Nationalities:
36% Venezuela | **28%** Cuba | **8%** Haiti | **4%** Ecuador | **4%** India

Demographic breakdown:

31% Female **43%** Males **12%** Girls **14%** Boys

Since July 2024, irregular arrivals began to decline steadily, coinciding with the signing of an agreement between Panama and the US relating to the Darien in July. Despite the decrease, 2024 was the year with the second highest number of refugees and migrants Honduras ever registered.

It is important to highlight that the proportion of **women and children has increased from 47% in 2023 to 52.5% in 2024,** emphasizing the need to step up efforts for a differentiated protection response.

This year, **INM in Choluteca registered the arrival of 10,321 people,** the top 10 nationalitiess were from Cuba: 27%, Haiti: 20%, Bangladesh: 7%, Venezuela: 7%, India: 6%, Nepal: 5%, Guinea: 5%, Ecuador: 4%, Brazil: 3% and Chile: 3%, highlighting that six of them are non-Spanish speakers, which led to an additional challenge.

Last year, 2,700 Chileans arrived in Honduras, of whom 2,640 were children between the ages of 0 and 10, many of them born to Haitian parents.

From January to December 2024, **UNHCR reported approximately 453,050 people arriving at the western border of Agua Caliente**, intending to cross into Guatemala. In December 19,400 arrivals were recorded compared to 51,600 arrivals in February 2024. It is reported that due to the reduction in arrivals at the Machuca checkpoint, smugglers are misinforming people about the dangers of the route, particularly affecting families with children or those not travelling in groups.

Asylum

Between January and December 2024, INM registered 173 asylum applications, representing a **62% increase** compared to the same period in 2023 and marking the highest number of asylum applications ever registered in Honduras. Most asylum-seekers are from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia and El Salvador, among 10 other countries. 38% of the applications were filed in Tegucigalpa, 27% in Choluteca, 16% in Danlí, 6% in San Pedro Sula, among six other locations.

Returnees

From January to December 2024, **34,386 Hondurans nationals were deported** to the three Centres for Returned Migrants in Cortés. Compared to November, in December the number decreased by 19%. Of them, 504 were women, 1,583 were men, 581 were accompanied children in family units, and 94 were unaccompanied children. **UNHCR identified 105 people in need of protection, and 43 people who had been internally displaced.**

RESPONSE

PROTECT

Capacity Building on International Protection

In December, UNHCR supported the **strengthening of the government's capacity** to assist and protect people forced to flee, ensuring their safety and well-being.

On 5 December, as part of the City of Solidarity initiative, UNHCR donated 6 stretchers and 30 chairs to the Municipality of the Central District's health clinic. The donation aims to **improve emergency medical services for asylum-seekers and refugees** ensuring their access to life-saving care.

UNHCR donated nine shelving units to the Municipal Emergency Committee of Santa Fe in Ocotepeque to **improve the storage capacity for emergency supplies and the response** to the challenges presented by displacement.

On 4 December, UNHCR held a workshop in Choluteca to **enhance the institutional capacity** of 30 members of the Departmental Committee for Refugees and Migrants.

UNHCR and INM also **held a workshop on international protection in Comayagua,** the first one for government institutions in the region. 15 officials from the INM, the municipal governments of Comayagua and La Paz and the municipal police attended.

Furthermore, UNHCR staff from Honduras and Guatemala **met with local border authorities to exchange information on returnee and people who crossed the country responses.** The meeting aimed to strengthen institutional capacities in both countries and enhance coordination for the humanitarian response in the border area.

Monitoring and Protection Missions

UNHCR and INM conducted a monitoring mission in Comayagua, where it was identified that **around 300 refugees and migrants arrive and transit each month**, mostly from Venezuela and Colombia. Local actors reported human rights violations, including violence against women and girls and assaults happening to people on the move. Local authorities highlighted the lack of services and requested capacity building to better assist.

On 10 December, UNHCR conducted a participatory assessment with **35 asylum-seekers in Choluteca**, while also providing vital medical care, food, clothing, and essential information. Key findings emphasized the **need for improved access to livelihoods and social inclusion.**

Humanitarian assistance

On 18 December, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Human Development Centre and the State Secretariat for Risk Management and National Emergencies, presented a **contingency plan for large groups of people in need of protection in Choluteca.** The plan aims to enhance emergency response capabilities in regions experiencing significant displacement.

Additionally, tarpaulins were donated to improve the infrastructure at the El Pescadero humanitarian space, **enhancing the reception conditions for people forced to flee.**

Honduran and Guatemalan local border authorities, together with humanitarian organizations, met to strengthen the coordination of the humanitarian response in the border area of Agua Caliente, Ocotepeque, in order to minimize protection risks for returnees and people who crossed the country.

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RESPOND

In December, UNHCR and partners provided direct support to cover basic needs, supported the enhancement of reception centres, and provided medical care to improve the well-being in a safe environment of people forced to flee, through the following activities:

Caritas provided shelter to over 1,700 refugees and migrants in Danlí and 60 people in Choluteca. Between January and December 2024, Caritas sheltered over 21,300 people in these two locations, primarily from Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador.

World Vision provided **international protection information to over 6,700 people forced to flee** in El Paraíso, Choluteca, and Ocotepeque through its Mobile Information Services. They were informed on their rights, the right to seek asylum in Honduras, and the humanitarian services available in the country.

CONADEH's mobile unit — supported by UNHCR — provided **legal counselling to 234 people** (mostly from Venezuela, Cuba and China) at the Temporary Rest Centers managed by FAS in El Paraíso and at the border of Las Manos with Nicaragua. CONADEH highlighted that the number of Chinese nationals crossing the country in December slightly increased in comparison to the previous month.

Doctors of the World **attended to 310 people at Las Manos and El Pescadero borders**. In **Ocotepeque**, Doctors of the World **attended 216 people**. People who crossed the country received individual medical attention, mental health assistance, and information on sexual and reproductive health.

Ocotepeque's Migrant Shelter, managed by the Pastoral de Movilidad Humana of the Catholic Church, provided **assistance to 389 people**. Of these **58%** were from **Venezuela**, **32%** from **Honduras**, and **10%** from **other nationalities.** Out of the total, 79% were heading northbound, and **21% were returning.**

Furthermore, **UNHCR strengthened the response of 15 shelters hosting people forced to flee** across El Paraíso, Choluteca, Cortés, and Ocotepeque by donating 300 adult mattresses; 430 baby mattresses; 1,080 bedspreads for adults; 1,440 bath towels for adults; 620 bed linen sets; 470 pillows; 60 bunk beds; five washing machines; five tumble dryers; eight microwaves; five industrial refrigerators; and other essential items.

Working together with local actors in Machuca, UNHCR and its partners are addressing the needs of people, such as access to individual medical care, minimizing protection risks.

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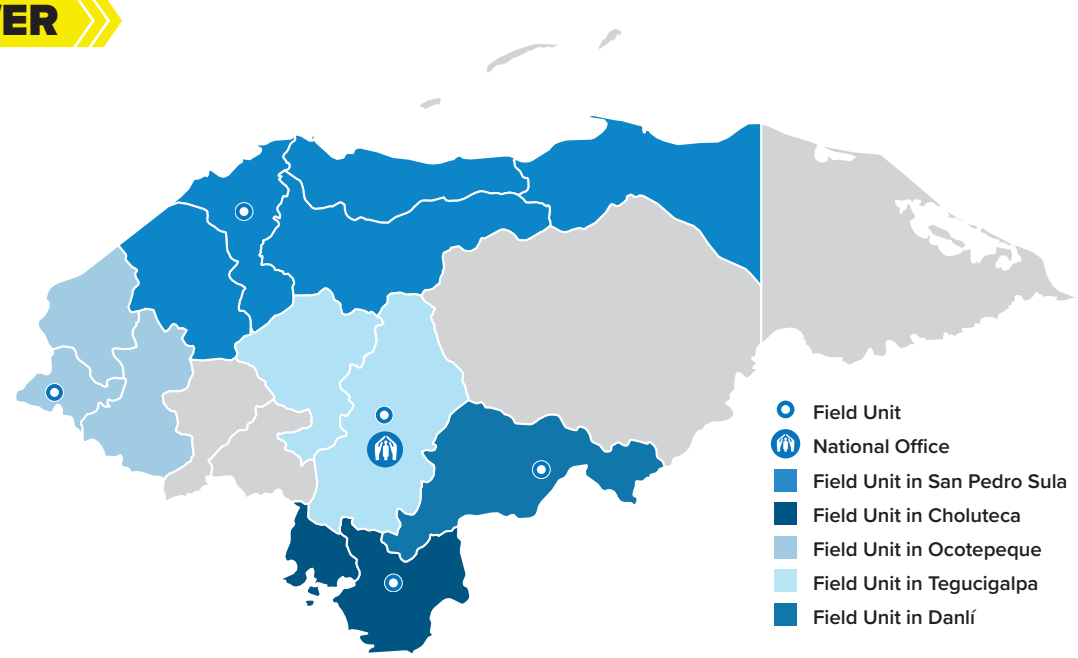
EMPOWER



Child Protection

In December, UNHCR supported initiatives to prevent forced recruitment of children and violence against women and girls by **promoting arts programmes, strengthening the capacity of community leaders, and fostering social cohesion.**

UNHCR facilitated the construction of a community gymnasium in a high-risk neighbourhood in Tegucigalpa, identified as a **key space to engage children and youth** in positive activities and prevent forced recruitment.

The Municipal Community Art Program in Chamelecón engaged over 65 children in activities designed to **prevent forced recruitment,** with support from Children International and the Municipality of San Pedro Sula.

Furthermore, UNHCR, with the Secretariat of Education, developed a **comprehensive action plan to protect children's educational rights and prevent forced recruitment** in 2025.

Community Empowerment

UNHCR met with **48 community leaders** from the southern region, to discuss the Internal Displacement Prevention, Care, and Protection Law, and community actions for 2025.

UNHCR held feedback activities in seven high-risk displacement communities in Tegucigalpa, with the participation of 40 people. These activities helped **strengthen programming and ensure the response reflects community needs.**

UNHCR and Children International presented a pilot program called Express-Art. This program aims to **empower youth and enhancing their socio-emotional skills.** 20 community leaders and volunteers participated in this initiative.

Furthermore, 120 community leaders from San Pedro Sula and surrounding areas participated in **technical sessions to discuss challenges and share solutions for preventing forced recruitment** in these communities highly impacted by violence.

16 Days of Activism activities

From 25 November to 10 December, UNHCR organised the following activities to call for an end to violence against women and girls.

UNHCR organised the fourth edition of the **"Journey Against Violence Against Women and Girls" marathon in Ocotepeque**, with the participation of around 300 children, young people, women, and men. The marathon promoted hiking, running, and cycling activities, under the campaign: "One more step in the prevention of violence against women and girls."

UNHCR and Doctors of the World held a **self-care workshop with the Ocotepeque women's network.** 60 women participated enhancing their capacities to support survivors of violence against women and girls. Moreover, a total of 219 officials from the Ocotepeque Health Secretariat received training in violence against women and girls, and the integrated response route, while in Nueva Arcadia, Copán, UNHCR held a workshop for 18 public officials to map services available for violence against women and girls survivors.

UNHCR and the Secretariat of Women's Affairs launched a new episode of the podcast "Let's Talk to the UN", focusing on the **virtual platform CONECTA and its impact on the protection of women who have survived violence.**

UNHCR and the Civil Society Group organised the **National Meeting of Women Community Leaders on Self-Care and Self-Protection.** The event gathered 23 organisations with over 50 women within the Roundtable of Migrant and Displaced Women.

In El Paraíso, UNHCR and UNFPA held a joint session to **improve referral and response mechanisms for violence against women and girls.** Furthermore, UNHCR and the Secretariat of Women's Affairs organized a workshop in Danlí, for 25 organizations to strengthen national and local responses to violence against women and girls displaced by violence.

UNHCR through these activities **raised awareness of the risks faced by forcibly displaced women,** enhancing their participation and leadership.

SOLVE

In 2024, UNHCR provided **durable solutions to 978 people forced to flee their homes and at risk of displacement** in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Choluteca, and Ocotepeque, enhancing their employability, social cohesion, and the country's economic stability.

In December, the last cohorts of participants finalized their Internship for Employment Program. In total, **219 displaced people participated in this program in 2024.** Of them, 61% secured employment after completing their internships, while 17% are waiting for job offers. Additionally, **79% of the companies involved in the programmme provided financial support or covered food expenses for the interns.** UNHCR helped to select the participants, established links with the private sector, managed the direct support to cover basic needs, and provided accident insurance for all participants.

UNHCR collaborated with key stakeholders to ensure the **successful implementation of the internship programme**.

Secretariat of Labour and Social Security played an active role in identifying companies and registering participants in the Employment Platform. The National Institute for Vocational Training contributed by identifying profiles and providing soft skills training. The companies hosting the individuals were responsible for training, supervision, and providing complementary economic support. Finally, the Business Development Centre facilitated the matching of companies with the appropriate profile and provided follow-up throughout the process.

Furthermore, on 4 December, UNHCR with FUNDHARSE (social arm of private sector in Honduras) presented the Excellence Award for Inclusive Companies, **recognizing socially responsible businesses and their inclusion efforts towards refugees and internally displaced people.** GxS, HUSH and IPSA received the awards for inclusion, promotion of skills training and mentorship for displaced people.

UNHCR thanks the contributions of donor countries such as

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*As of December 2024

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